



Durand Primary School

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Headteacher - Mrs H Kilbourn

December 2023

Dear Parents / Carers,

In my previous newsletter I was welcoming you into a new school year and we were just seeing hints of Autumn. Suddenly, winter has arrived, we're now on snow watch and all the trees are bare! I must say a huge thank you to Mr Lane who has done a wonderful job of keeping paths and the carpark as leaf free as possible; always a real challenge at this time of year. Christmas was also an age away yet here we are, concerts, discos, winter fayre and pantomime complete - Christmas in school 'done'.

It has been another busy half term with lots of experiences for the pupils - please see class updates below for details and pictures. It is always so lovely to see the children happy and engaged in learning.

Parent Pay and Dinners: Dinners must be ordered via ParentPay before 8:30am. If you haven't ordered a meal, you will need to provide a packed lunch for your child. Despite the offer of a free school dinner, we still urge you all to apply for the Free School Meals Grant if you think you might be eligible (please see below).

Cost of the school day: Might you qualify for the School Essentials Grant? Have a look before you think not. You get £££ and the school gets £££ to support your child. Over 30% of our children do and the grant makes a real difference to you and us. [Free School Meals & School Essentials Grant - Monmouthshire](#)

Parent Teacher Association: A huge thank you to our wonderful PTA for organising some fabulous events this term. Our special guest Pudsey Bear was a particular highlight and thank you for your support in helping us raise over £200 for Children In Need. Both the Winter Fayre and Christmas Discos were a huge success. The children enjoyed both events which were well supported by yourselves, so thank you. Please come along to the next PTA meeting on Friday 12th January at 2.00pm in our Nursery building to show your support for future events and join our active team of parents.

Christmas Concerts: Christmas concert week was definitely a proud Headteacher moment for me. The children were utterly amazing and each and every concert was fabulous. Thank you and well done to all of the children for their amazing efforts, thank you to our wonderful staff for pulling it all together and thank you to you, parents and carers for practising with your children, finding costumes and coming along watch and support. It really was a joyous week!





Attendance: We are extremely proud of the improvement to our attendance figures this term and want to thank you for getting your children to school to support their learning and wellbeing. We are currently above 93% and are striving hard to keep the improvements going. Although we fully support keeping children home if they are sick, we want to fully promote the importance of being in school both for academic development and also social and emotional wellbeing. If your child is too unwell to attend please call the office to inform us of their absence. For safeguarding purposes we will contact parents and carers if we have not received a message. I thank you for your continued support with this process.

Safe Parking: For the safety of our pupils I ask that all families arriving to school by car park with care and consideration. Please be vigilant and manoeuvre with care and attention. Please be aware of pupils crossing the road and be thoughtful of visibility and pathways when parking. A polite reminder that disabled spaces are for disabled badge holders only. Why not Park & Stride to the Junior gate entrance - parking at the Choir Hall, the Leisure Centre or one of the many cul de sacs. This will alleviate traffic issues in and around the Alianore Road entrance. I thank you for your support in making our school as safe as it can possibly be for our pupils.

I wish you all a restful holiday time and best wishes for 2024. I look forward to seeing everyone back in the new year!

Kind Regards,

Mrs Kilbourn

(Headteacher)

Nursery update:

Nursery have had a very busy half term looking at the autumn season. We have enjoyed playing with leaves and collecting them. Nursery looked at a hedgehog and learnt that they hibernate in the winter. We made a nest for our toy hedgehog to hibernate over the winter. Nursery looked at the story The Scarecrow Wedding. We went to the forest and collected what we needed to have our very own scarecrow wedding!! All the children have been working hard with writing their name, recognising numbers and shapes. We have seen a big improvement in all of our children's development over this half term.





Reception update:

Reception class has had a busy half term looking at the Autumn season. We have enjoyed playing with leaves and collecting them, and turning them into art pieces. They loved deseeding pumpkins. The Reception children enjoyed the story "Don't hog the hedge", learned what parts of a hedgehog are called and learnt that they hibernate in the winter. We made lots of nests for our toy hedgehog, called Hoglet. During December, the children made Christmas decorations, and learned all about Nativity and why we celebrate Christmas. We are very proud of the children's performance during the Nursery and Reception Christmas Sing Along. The children have been learning their sounds, Read Write Inc, and some are starting to blend and are getting ready to read. Well Done Reception!





Year 1 update:

The children have worked so hard this half term especially with their reading and writing. I'm sure you have seen huge improvements too. We had a thrilling Pirate Day when we found out our pirate names, made pirate punch, built a pirate ship for the whole class to sail in and made eye patches and hats too. Our story 'A New Home for a Pirate' has taught children new vocabulary, how to write lists of pirate paraphernalia and to describe the characters using adjectives. The children researched facts about the famous pirates William Kidd, Blackbeard, Black Bart and Anne Bonney and created posters to share these facts with others. In maths we have been learning addition using ten frames and number bonds for 10.



Year 2

It's been another busy half term in Year 2, we read the story Pumpkin Soup about friendships and the importance of sharing. We then worked in teams to make some pumpkin soup and write the recipe. A lot of our learning has been around the story we have been reading "Lost and Found" by Oliver Jeffers. We have been designing and creating our own boats by first investigating materials to find out the best waterproof materials that float. After building our boats we then tested them to find the strongest boats. We used all of this learning to help us write a set of instructions on how to make a boat.

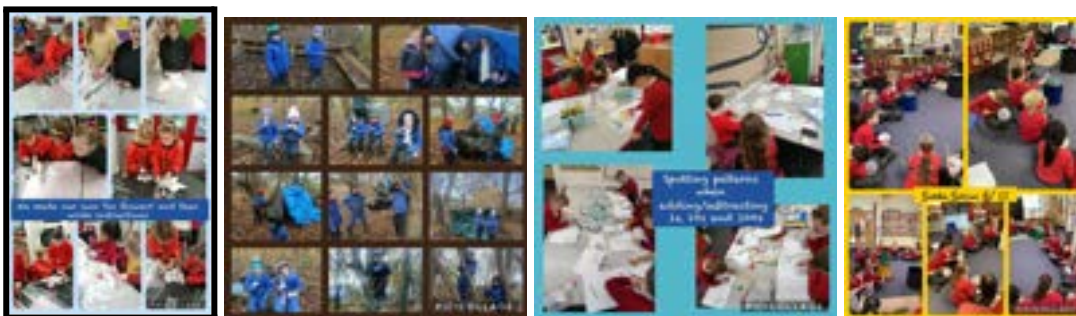




We made all sorts of boats, all shapes and sizes!

Year 3 update:

We have had another busy half term in Year 3, starting with our absolutely amazing time in forest school sessions every Friday. In Literacy, we just finished reading our text 'The Tin Forest' which the children have thoroughly enjoyed. We've learned to write a diary entry to explore feelings, an informal letter using 'sensational sentences' and made our own tin flowers to inform our instructional writing. In maths we've been focusing on addition and subtraction, using our previous learning of place value and lots of practical resources to help us. They will continue developing their subtraction skills for the first few weeks of the new year. In our theme work, the children have been delving into the history of our local area, comparing photos from then and now and learning about how the population of the town has grown in the last 200 years. We learned how to create a timeline of our own lives and then used this to make a timeline of Caldicot's recent history. The children are making big strides in their Welsh speaking and technology too where they've been learning how to create and edit videos on Flipgrid. They are always so eager to learn more and should be very proud of themselves!





Year 4 update:

We have had an extremely busy half term in Year 4. We have identified the features of an instructional text and used our knowledge to write a set of instructions on how to trap the Iron Man. In maths we have been using our knowledge of place value to add two 4 digit numbers and have solved a range of addition reasoning and problem solving questions. In our theme work we have been writing algorithms using j2code and we have also used our maths and investigative skills to find out 'Do bigger feet make more noise?' During 'Shwmae' day the children demonstrated superb skills in Welsh and they have also developed their confidence and performance skills during our concert rehearsals and I'm sure you will all agree that they were amazing.



Year 5 update:

We have had a very busy and fun half term in Year 5. The children have been amazing in Christmas concert rehearsals and can't wait to share this with their families. In maths we have been focussing on multiplication and division, building on what they have learnt in place value and addition and subtraction. In Literacy we have now finished reading *The Snow Spider*, by Jenny Nimmo. The children have loved reading the book and have had some lovely learning experiences from it. In our theme work we have, following on from our investigations into light, we have been learning about Thomas Edison and have now begun to research different rivers in Wales.



Year 6 update:

Year 6 have been busy looking at features and writing biographies about a filmmaker Georges Melies who appears in our book *Hugo Cabret*. We have been busy learning about moving toys, ready to design and make our own out of wood before the end of term. Many Year 2,3 and 4's have enjoyed being part of Y6 clubs! Our class designed 4 sessions for the children ranging from art to gaming to ball skills. We are very proud of their independence and organisation skills needed for this after learning some games



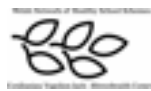


from Jack at Mon Life. We have explored some dance styles in the 1960's such as the mashed potato and the twist - we really enjoyed making our own short dances in these styles. Of course not forgetting helping get the school Christmas ready by putting up decorations!



Forest School

Year 3 had a fantastic time during their forest school sessions. The children focussed on how they could use natural materials to make art. The children were separated into groups and were given a different animal to paint. They used mud and food colouring to draw their animal. They also enjoyed using hammers to bash leaves and flower petals on material bunting. They used woodland items to design a Pudsey Bear for Children in Need and made clay mobiles. The children had a lot of fun getting dirty in our new mud kitchen and toasting marshmallows over the fire. A very enjoyable and successful forest school had by all.





Pupil committees:

Thank you to the Eco Team for launching our Wow active travel campaign with an informative assembly. They also did a great job at organising the Christmas jumper and toy swap. School Council have surveyed all classes to find out how we can improve playtimes. They will feed back to the leadership team and make a plan for improvements in the new year. Thank you House Captains for taking part in training for playtime games and using these to keep our younger pupils busy and active. Year 6 pupils did a fantastic job at organising clubs for Y2 and Y4 pupils, these included arts, crafts, dance and sports. It was such a success we will be planning for other year groups next term.



Dates for your Diary:

Wednesday 20th December - Last day in school for pupils

Thursday 21st December - INSET Training day school closed for pupils teachers on site

Friday 22nd December - Training Day - School closed to pupils and staff will complete twilights in lieu of the training day

Monday 25th December - Friday 5th January - Christmas holidays

Monday 8th January - Pupils return to school

Tuesday 9th January - Deadline for September 2024 Reception applications (5pm)

Friday 12th January - PTA meeting at school. 2.00pm

Tuesday 6th February - Safer Internet Day

Thursday 8th February - Last day in school before half term

Friday 9th February - **Cluster Inset training day - School closed to pupils**

Monday 12th February - Friday 16th February - Half term

Monday 19th February - Pupils return to school

Friday 1st March - School Eisteddfod

Friday 22nd March - Last day of school before Easter holidays

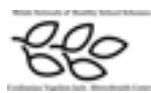
Monday 25th March - Friday 5th April - Easter holidays

Monday 8th April - **Training Day - School closed to pupils**

Tuesday 9th April - Pupils return to school

Monday 6th May - May Day Bank Holiday - School closed

Friday 24th May - Last day in school before half term





Monday 27th May-friday 31st May - Half term

Monday 3rd June - Pupils return to school

Thursday 18th July - Last day of school before Summer holidays

Friday 19th July - **Training Day - School closed to pupils** - This date may need to be changed if we have to close the school earlier in the year due to Elections.

All dates are provisional and subject to change.

